

## **DARTMOOR**

As the mists swirl round the granite tors that loom out of unspoiled countryside it is easy to understand why 10 million people come to experience the rugged beauty of Dartmoor every year.



**Two bridges**



**Buckfastleigh Abbey**

It is a setting for many books and films, a place where people come to be closer to nature and to pitch their abilities against its wilderness. This treasure, with its unique landscape and atmosphere, is one of the finest National Parks in Britain. It lies just a short drive from the popular resorts (e.g. Torquay) set in the rolling hills of south Devon, stretching 369 square miles from Ivybridge to Okehampton and from Tavistock to Bovey Tracey.

Dartmoor's beautiful landscape includes wooded valleys, windswept hills, the amazing granite tors, plus picturesque thatch and granite villages just waiting to be discovered. Some 600 miles of public rights of way cover this stunning countryside so visitors can explore the open moorland on foot and horseback discovering more about its wildlife and wealth of archaeological remains.

Amongst its most popular inhabitants are the Dartmoor Ponies that roam freely over the moorland. Living out on the moor all year round, the ponies spend most of their time in small herds of mares and young ponies with one adult stallion. Although they live wild, local farmers with grazing rights own all the ponies.

Every year in late September and October pony drifts are held, during which the ponies are gathered up, checked and the weaker ponies, that would struggle to cope with a bleak Dartmoor winter, are sent to market.

It is wonderful to watch the ponies roaming wild. Visitors are asked not to feed these lovely characters because this attracts them towards the roads where they are in danger of being hit by vehicles. They are wild animals so there is also a risk that they might bite or kick so it is best to admire them from a safe distance, however tempting it may be to get close enough to pat them.



**Sharpitor**



**Ivybridge**

Anyone exploring the moor will discover that people have trodden the paths before them for many years. Evidence of its fascinating history can be found all over the land in the form of Bronze Age settlements and burial grounds. There are also remains of Iron Age hill forts on the edge of the moor.

The moor is also rich in wonderful flora and fauna. Wild flowers cover the vast moorlands and its woods, rivers, streams and reservoirs make Dartmoor a haven for the many types of birds and animals that live here. As well as the charming ponies, visitors may spot buzzards and rabbits, and the eagle-eyed may even catch a glimpse of the deer that live on the moor, or even the rare otters, that play in its streams and rivers.

Just visit and enjoy.

**Barry Mayne**